

The Code Commission is proposing for adoption generic guiding principles on animal welfare which have been endorsed by the Working Group on Animal Welfare.

SECTION X . X . X .

ANIMAL WELFARE

CHAPTER X . X . 1 .

INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDELINES FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

Article x.x.x.1.

Guiding principles for animal welfare

- 1) That there is a critical relationship between animal health and animal welfare.
- 2) That the internationally recognised 'five freedoms' (freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition; freedom from fear and distress; freedom from physical and thermal discomfort; freedom from pain, injury and disease; and freedom to express normal patterns of behaviour) provide valuable guidance in animal welfare.
- 3) That the internationally recognised 'three Rs' (reduction in numbers of animals, refinement of experimental methods and replacement of animals with non-animal techniques) provide valuable guidance for the use of animals in science.
- 4) That the scientific assessment of animal welfare involves diverse elements which need to be considered together, and that selecting and weighing these elements often involves value-based assumptions which should be made as explicit as possible.
- 5) That the use of animals in agriculture and science, and for companionship, recreation and entertainment, makes a major contribution to the wellbeing of people.
- 6) That the use of animals carries with it a duty to ensure the welfare of such animals to the greatest extent practicable.
- 7) That improvements in farm animal welfare can often improve productivity and food safety, and hence lead to economic benefits.
- 8) That equivalent outcomes (performance criteria), rather than identical systems (design criteria), be the basis for comparison of animal welfare standards and guidelines.

Scientific basis for guidelines

- 1) Welfare is a broad term which describes how well individuals are coping with their environment, and includes their health, their feelings and other good and bad effects on brain and body mechanisms for dealing with problems.
- 2) Welfare can be scientifically evaluated and can be shown to range from very good to very poor. The study of how to assess animal welfare has progressed rapidly in recent years and evidence from such studies has been used in the formulation of these guidelines.
- 3) Some studies of animal welfare involve assessing the extent of stress, which occurs when individuals are not able to cope with the consequences of treatment by humans or other impacts on the animal's environment. Other indicators of poor welfare reveal how much the individual is having to do in order to cope with problems.
- 4) Other areas of animal welfare research provide further information about the needs of animals by measuring the strengths of their positive and negative preferences. Once the needs of animals are known, conditions and treatment methods which fulfil their needs can be devised and used.
- 5) Some measures of poor welfare involve assessing the extent of pain or impaired functioning associated with injury or disease. Many of the problems can be revealed by an inspection of the animal.
- 6) Many measurements of animal welfare can be used as performance indicators in the evaluation of general methods for the keeping and treatment of animals and the actions of individuals who have an impact on those animals. Using such evidence, the acceptability of systems and of human performance can be decided.

Ethical basis for guidelines

Those who use animals have obligations concerning the welfare of those animals. Actions should be taken to minimise pain, anxiety and stress experienced by animals during their lives, and to maximise good welfare through the use of adequate housing and ethically accepted methods of treatment, inspection, training and management.